

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The Consent of the Governed

From the time of its creation, Provo Valley has been a favored area. Set high in the peaks of the rugged Rocky Mountains, the valley seemed destined to be the home of a chosen people.

The settlers who moved into this country were motivated by deeply religious principles, and were governed in their lives by righteous motives. Because they had been schooled in principles of righteousness, they were able to govern themselves accordingly. This made civil government practically unnecessary, and the leadership provided through the Church adequately filled the needs of civil and spiritual guidance.

The settlements along Snake Creek in Provo Valley's western region began in 1859, and by 1862 one of the first settlers, Sidney H. Epperson, was appointed to serve as the presiding elder. In this position he exercised all the government direction necessary.

Eventually two settlements sprang up along Snake Creek. Elder Epperson was called as presiding elder in the Upper Settlement and David Van Wagonen was named as the lower settlement's presiding officer.

These men, who were individuals of strong leadership, continued in their presiding positions until 1866 when the Black Hawk Indian War threatened the area and the upper and lower settlements joined to form the new community of Midway.

During the threat of Indian war Elder Epperson also assumed the duties of military leader. After the Black Hawk War was ended, the people of Midway strengthened their community ties by building permanent homes in the townsite. Elder Epperson continued as the presiding elder until 1870 when he was succeeded by Henry S. Alexander. David Van Wagonen served again after Elder Alexander and then when the Midway Ward of the Church was formed John Watkins was called as Bishop and by virtue of his position became the community leader.

Midway's years under Bishop Watkins were years of steady improvement and expansion. Progress was made in laying out streets and building irrigation systems. The Midway Irrigation Company was formally organized on February 18, 1888.

New converts to the Church began to settle in Midway, many of them coming from Switzerland. This saw a fusing of different nationalities, but the common love of the Gospel, their common goal of liberty and love of freedom enabled the people to work together harmoniously. From this experience developed patriotic, loyal American citizens.

In 1873 a Tithing Office was built in the community of pot rock which was abundant in the area. This was used for English speaking meetings, and by 1875 a German Hall had been constructed to accommodate the German-speaking Swiss. All the sermons, as well as the ordinances and the by-laws of the community and the irrigation company were translated into German.

By 1891 the community had grown large enough that it was difficult for one man to carry both the Church and the civic responsibilities of leadership. So on June 1, 1891 Midway was incorporated as a town and on August 1, 1891, Alvah J. Alexander was elected as the first town board president. By January 23, 1892 Mr. Alexander and other elected officials had extended the boundaries of the community to the present proportions.

At first there were no Town Hall or community offices so the officials met to transact their business in stores or private homes. Many of these meetings were held in George Bonner's store, the German Hall or in Godfried F. Buehler's store.

In 1898 James B. Wilson succeeded Mr. Alexander. Those elected to serve on his board included Henry T. Coleman, John Morton, George Bonner and Godfried Buehler.

Mr. Wilson and his board, consisting of George Bonner Jr., Fredrick Haueter, Attewall Wootton Jr. and Andreas Burgener were confronted with the serious problem of contagious disease in 1900.

Records show that on April 20, 1900 the board met with Doctors John W. Aird and Wm. Russell Wherritt to discuss the contagious fever that was sweeping through the town. Mr. Bonner and Mr. Wilson were appointed as a board of health and authorized to negotiate with the doctors in controlling any contagious disease that came into the community. This was probably the first attempt to quarantine those with serious diseases.

This same board also went on record in a meeting held December 21, 1900 as unanimously opposing smallpox vaccinations, even though it was a state law.

The community prospered under Mr. Wilson's leadership and on August 20, 1901, the town was in such good financial condition that the board voted not to collect the taxes which they had levied the previous June.

Mr. Wilson was elected to another term in January of 1902, with his new board consisting of Henry T. Coleman, Fredrick Haueter, Attewall Wootton Jr. and Godfried Buehler. George A. Huntington was appointed justice of the peace.

This new board again faced serious disease problems with the outbreak of diphtheria and smallpox epidemics that swept through the entire community. A complete quarantine was imposed and no one under 16 years of age was allowed to meet or gather in groups. The quarantine

was lifted in February of 1903, and upon the motion of Henry T. Coleman the board voted to furnish free of charge to all Midway residents the necessary materials to disinfect their homes. They purchased 1,000 pounds of sulphur and retained Dr. John E. Morton as quarantine physician.

The board, at this time, was using the German Hall for its meetings. They paid 25 cents per meeting for the use of the hall.

Minutes of the town board showed that on March 31, 1903 it was "moved and carried that a committee of two be appointed to find out on what terms the cemetery can be acquired." Henry T. Coleman and Frederick Haueter were appointed to the cemetery committee and they subsequently reported to the board that authorities of the Church, who held title to the cemetery, were agreeable to transfer the title to the town. Formal transfer of the title took place on August 3, 1904, with James B. Wilson acting for the town board.

During the decade from 1904 to 1914 the affairs of town government continued in the sound, conservative style of past administrations. John A. Fortie was elected president in 1904, and under his direction a franchise was given to the Bell Telephone Co. to bring phone service to the community. James B. Wilson rejoined the town board in 1906, and with Wilford Van Wagonen, Joseph W. Francom, Frederick Haueter and John Morton served on the board. They approved a new plot plan for cemetery lots on Sept. 18, 1906.

Attewall Wootton became board president in 1908. Serving with him were Peter Abplanalp, Robert B. Ross, J. Ulrick Probst and Alfred Alder. This board took steps to provide the first electric lights in Midway. They bonded the town for \$7,600 and worked together with Heber and Charleston to build electric power lines.

Mr. Wilson continued as president of the board in 1912 and had as board members Jacob Probst, James T. Pyper, Henry Albert Huber and William W. Wilson. Clerks to the board included William Abplanalp, Ardell Buehler, Lacy Abplanalp and Clara Huber. In 1913 the board authorized that water from Indian Spring be used at the town cemetery.

Wilford Van Wagonen became president of the town board in January of 1916. Serving with him were Alfred Alder, Samuel Hair, Jacob Probst and William L. Van Wagoner. This board approved installation of electric street lights. They also authorized construction of cement bridges on main street from the Van Wagoner Brother's Store to the O'Neil Hotel.

John Carroll was the next board president, taking office in 1919. Those on the board included George A. Davis, Fred Hasler, James T. Pyper and William W. Wilson. Mary E. Abegglen was secretary-treasurer. On May 8, 1919 the board declared a half-day holiday to wel-

come home Midway men who served in the Armed Forces. A celebration, refreshments and dancing were enjoyed by the citizenry.

John N. Carroll continued as board president in 1922 with Fred Hasler, Samuel Hair, Karl Probst and Alvah Ross as members. Lamond S. McQuarrie was the clerk, and later joined the board as a member, along with William W. Wilson.

Mr. Carroll and his board negotiated an agreement with the Heber Valley Fire Department to provide fire protection in Midway. This board also passed an ordinance fixing the automobile speed limit within the town at 12 miles per hour.

Electric street lights were first installed down the center of the streets, but by 1926 this made automobile traffic difficult, so the board authorized moving the poles to the sides of the road. This made it necessary to remove the beautiful trees that lined each side of main street.

Samuel Hair was elected board president in 1928. Chosen to serve with him were Nephi Probst, Albert Kohler, George T. Watkins and F. O. Haueter. Problems that came before this board included the extension of Indian Spring water to Stringtown for culinary purposes, control of waste water on town streets, the establishment of dog licenses and financial difficulties that resulted from the great depression in the nation. With the advent of the depression many local problems were laid aside because of the urgent need to care for unemployed. Farm income fell off rapidly and a majority of Midway's citizens felt the pinch of economic difficulties. Many cooperative efforts were carried out with county and state governments and Church officials to promote employment and assist needy persons.

Mr. Hair was re-elected in 1929 and started his new term January 8, 1930 with Fredrick Hasler, Albert Stewart, August Kohler and George Watkins serving on the board. One of their first major problems concerned bonding the town to join with Heber and Charleston in purchasing new equipment and rebuilding the municipal power facilities. Mr. Hair and Mr. Kohler opposed the bonding, but Mr. Watkins, Mr. Hasler and Mr. Stewart voted as a majority to join the other municipalities. The bond issue was placed before the citizens and when they voted to approve the bond, Mr. Hair and Mr. Kohler joined with the others to make the venture a success.

The board also approved creation of a Midway School Library.

In the fall of 1931 August Kohler was elected board president and he took office in 1932. Elected to serve on the board were Joseph Galli, Charles L. Davis, Samuel Hair, William Haueter and Luke E. Provost.

The board began consideration in July, 1932 of a proposal that the town buy the Midway Water Works Company. A group of stockholders made the proposal, and the town board took the matter under advisement. By the summer of 1933 the board was ready to move ahead on the proposal. The minutes carry the following resolution, unanimously